

Pronounced Ishka Baa-ha



Uisce Beatha's celtic sounds packed 'em in at the Deuce.

PHOTO: MIKE GRAHAM

by Leslie J. Furlong

People of all checks and stripes crowded into the Double Deuce this weekend, from the flannel-shirted regulars to people who reminded me of my parents, for a wild night of Celtic mayhem as Uisce Beatha took to the stage.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Uisce Beatha, Blackpool, Benn & Bob
Double Deuce
March 5

The crowd began piling in early on Saturday night, and not only for the headliner. Saturday also featured Black Pool, coming out to play after months in hibernation backed by a meatier rhythm section and the fiddle of Ashley MacIsaac. Additional entertainment was supplied by unbilled duo Benn and Bob's acoustic melodies.

During the Uisce Beatha show, the energy of the dance floor began to overflow into the rest of the bar. On several occasions the band called for the crowd to just move up and down because there was no room to go side to side. Wild.

"In a bar like this one, the people come to see the band," lead vocalist Alan Glen told me. "Universities are a different crowd. It's a battle to get their attention."

Uisce Beatha started out in London, Ontario, with brothers Alan and John playing a more traditional style of Scottish music. With the addition

of new members and a transplant to Halifax, the band moved towards a rock-inspired sound.

The resulting comparisons have been predictable. "People always compare us to the Pogues, and I can see why, but there is a lot more to us than just that."

Whatever the comparison, people all over have taken to this band. After this weekend the band embarks on a two month coast-to-coast tour. They have become a well-known party band, but the lyrics reveal a depth that goes unnoticed in the heat of the moment. Songs about life in a dying town are thrashed out with the same energy of a rowdy drinking song.

Alan says that he isn't too worried about those songs being ignored. "The lyrics of some of the songs occasionally get lost when people are

dancing and drinking, but there is no need to beat people over the head with a stick. I find that people who live the roughest lives are some of the happiest and kindest people you can meet."

The songs on their sophomore independent release *Voice of the Voyager* reveal both sides of this band. "Our songs are about everyday people leading everyday lives. You get to meet a lot of them when you live out of a suitcase."

"We're happier with this one," Alan tells me. "The first one we did in thirty-six hours. We had more time to play with this one and we're more comfortable with it."

Voice of the Voyager (named for a pirate radio station in the States) will be released the first weekend of May with a release party at the Double Deuce. I'll see you there.

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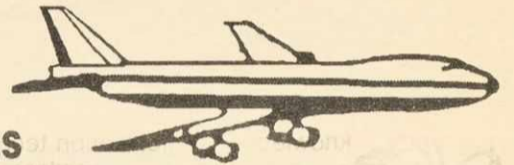
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